

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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DEPARTMENT PASS AGRICULTURE/FAS

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAOD US PL
SUBJ: MEETING OF SENATOR GEORGE MCGOVERN WITH POLISH MINISTER OF

AGRICULTURE KAZIMIERZ BARCIKOWSKI, 12:45 - 1:15 PM, AUGUST 18, 1977

1. SENATOR GEORGE MCGOVERN MET WITH POLISH MINISTER OF
AGRICULTURE KAZIMIERZ BARCIKOWSKI AT THE MINISTRY OF
AGRICULTURE IN WARSAW AT 12:45 PM, AUGUST 18, 1977. THE
MINISTER REVIEWED THE CURRENT DIFFICULT SITUATION IN POLISH
AGRICULTURE CAUSED BY HEAVY RAINS AND FLOODING DURING THE
GRAIN HARVEST. WE RECOUNTED THE LONG TRADITION OF
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AGRICULTURAL TRADE BETWEEN POLAND AND THE UNITED STATES,
AND STATED HIS COUNTRY'S INTEREST IN CONTINUING AND
FOSTERING THAT TRADE. HE SAID THA POLAND WANTS TO
PURCHASE A TOTAL OF 4 MILLION METRIC TONS OF GRAINS AND
FEEDSTUFFS FROM THE US IN 1977-78, AND MADE AN APPEAL TO
SENATOR MCGOVERN FOR EASIER, MORE FAVORABLE CREDIT TERMS.
THE MINISTER SPECIFICALLY PROPOSED FIVE-YEAR TERMS IN

PLACE OF THE CUSTOMARY THREE-YEAR REPAYMENT SCHEDULE. BARCIKOWSKI SAID THAT, IF YOU HAD A GOOD CUSTOMER, YOU SHOULD HELP HIM SURVIVE; IF HE SURVIVES, HE WILL THEN CONTINUE TO BE YOUR GOOD CUSTOMER.

2. SENATOR MCGOVERN QUESTIONED THE MINISTER REGARDING HIS ESTIMATE OF PROBABLY TOTAL GRAIN PRODUCTION THIS YEAR. ALTHOUGH EXTREMELY RELUCTANT TO NAME A FIGURE, THE MINISTER FINALLY ALLOWED THAT, AT BEST, THE HARVEST WOULD NOT EXCEED THE LEVEL OF LAST YEAR (20.8MMT). HE CONFIRMED THAT THE RYE CROP HAD BEEN SERIOUSLY DAMAGED, THAT RAPESEED PRODUCTION WOULD BE DOWN SHARPLY, THAT POTATOES WERE BEGINNING TO SHOW THE DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS OF PROLONGED EXCESS MOISURE, AND THAT THE CORN CROP WOULD BE SUITABLE ONLY FOR SILAGE. THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO WHEAT AND BARLEY, HE SAID, WOULD DEPEND HEAVILY ON THE WEATHER DURING THE NEXT FEW DAYS. THE MINISTER NOTED THAT A 22 MMT GRAIN CROP HAD BEEN EXPECTED BEFORE THE ONSLAUGHT OF FOUL WEATHER.

3. SENATOR MCGOVERN ASSURED MINISTER BARCIKOWSKI OF THE VALUE PLACED BY THE US ON POLAND AS AN IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL CUSTOMER. HE SAID HE COULD SPEAK ONLY AS ONE SENATOR. HE SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE PRESENT DIFFICULT AGRICULTURAL SITUATION IN POLAND, AND WOULD BRING IT TO THE ATTENTION OF HIS FELLOW SENATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEMBERS. SENATOR MCGOVERN CONCLUDED THAT THE MINISTER'S REQUEST FOR EXTENDED CREDIT TERMS WOULD RECEIVE SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK AND LIMITATIONS OF US LAW.

4. COMMENT: FROM THE PESSIMISTIC TONE OF HIS PRESENTATION, WE GAINED THE IMPRESSION THAT MINISTER BARCIKOWSKI HIMSELF DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS YEAR'S GRAIN OUTTURN WOULD REACH LAST YEAR'S 20.8 MMT LEVEL. ALTHOUGH STATISTICAL EVIDENCE IS LACKING BECAUSE THE HARVEST IS STILL UNDERWAY, WE FEEL THAT POLAND WILL BE FORTUNATE IF PRODUCTION REACHES 20 MMT.

5. AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE MCGOVERN-BARCIKOWSKI MEETING, FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER MAZURKIEWICZ TOLD THE AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE THAT HE WOULD RESPOND NEXT WEEK TO THE ATTACHE'S EARLIER WRITTEN REQUEST FOR 1977-78 TOTAL AGRICULTURAL-IMPORT REQUIREMENTS, TOTAL ANTICIPATED REQUIREMENTS FROM THE US, AND THE TOTAL LEVEL OF DESIRED CCC FUNDING. END COMMENT.

DAVIES

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